Business

Henry Waxman to Retire After More Than 35 Years in Congress

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Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) announced Thursday that he would not seek re-election when his term expires this November, bringing an end to a career that has spanned more than 35 years.

"The reason for my decision is simple. After 40 years in Congress, it's time for someone else to have the chance to make his or her mark, ideally someone who is young enough to make the long-term commitment that's required for real legislative success," he said in a statement Thursday. "I still feel youthful and energetic, but I recognize if I want to experience a life outside of Congress, I need to start soon. Public office is not the only way to serve, and I want to explore other avenues while I still can."

The 20-term congressman established a reputation in the House for being an unabashed advocate of far-left policies.

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius is escorted by Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., ranking Democrat on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, as she arrives on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2013. (AP)

He also became famous for his involvement in the passage of several bills, including laws to "make infant formula safer and more nutritious (1980), bring low-priced generic drugs to market (1984), clean the air (1990), provide services and medical care to people with AIDS (1996), and reform and modernize the Postal Service (2006)," the Washington Post reported.

He bragged in his statement Thursday that he has been at the forefront of the fight against changes in

climate.

"In recent years, I have been leading the fight in Congress for limits on the carbon pollution that is causing global climate change. In 2009, I joined with now Senator Ed Markey to pass the Waxman-Markey climate bill through the House," the California congressman said. "Last Congress, I formed a Safe Climate Caucus in the House and a Bicameral Task Force with Senator Sheldon Whitehouse to build public support for the effort to protect our fragile atmosphere for our children and grandchildren."

Waxman also played a key role in the passage of the Affordable Care Act, President Barack Obama's signature domestic achievement.

The secret to getting laws passed, Waxman explained, is "you outlast [the opposition]. You keep working. You keep looking for combinations."

"Everything I ever passed into law, with one exception, had bipartisan support," he added. "And the exception was the Affordable Care Act, where the Republicans should have been working with us but didn't want to give President Obama a victory, even though the law was based on a lot of Republican ideas."

Waxman was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1975, making him one of the last of the post-Watergate class, the Associated Press notes.

"I have had a long career and an eventful one — and I wouldn't trade any of it. I woke each day looking forward to opportunities to make our country stronger, healthier, and fairer," Waxman said Thursday. "And I will always be grateful for this honor and privilege."

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